

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for routing messages comprising:

receiving a message with a universal address;

5 sending a request for processing the universal address to a universal address service provider;

receiving a message delivery location based on the universal address; and

routing the message to the message delivery location.

10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein sending the request comprises sending a universal address service provider descriptor and user name.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein sending the request comprises sending a message type, universal address service provider descriptor, and user name.

15 4. The method of claim 1 wherein sending the request comprises sending a message service provider identification.

20 5. The method of claim 4 wherein receiving a message delivery location is based on the message service provider identification.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message with a universal address comprises receiving one of a letter and a package.

25 7. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message with a universal address comprises receiving one of a phone number, a pager message, and a facsimile.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message with a universal address comprises receiving an email.

30 9. A method for routing a message comprising:

receiving a universal address;

receiving a message type;  
determining the identity of the universal address requestor;  
accessing a database of universal addresses;  
determining a message delivery location based on the message type; and  
5 transmitting the message delivery location to the requestor.

10 10. The method of claim of claim 9 further comprising determining that the identity has been granted access to the message delivery location wherein the transmitting is performed only if it is determined that access has been granted.

11. The method of claim 9 further comprising receiving a request to change the message delivery location; and storing a new message delivery location.

15 12. The method of claim 9 wherein determining the message delivery location comprises selecting one message delivery location from a plurality of message delivery locations associated with the universal address.

20 13. The method of claim 9 wherein receiving the universal address comprises receiving a universal address service provider descriptor and user name.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein determining the identity of the universal address requestor comprises receiving a message service provider identification.

25 15. The method of claim 14 wherein accessing the database of universal addresses comprises determining if the message service provider has been granted access to the message delivery location corresponding to the universal address.

30 16. The method of claim 9 wherein determining the message delivery location comprises determining an address.

17. The method of claim 9 wherein determining the message delivery location comprises determining one of a phone number, a pager number, and a facsimile number.

18. The method of claim 9 wherein determining the message delivery location comprises determining an email address.

5        ~~19.~~ A message service provider comprising:  
an interface for receiving a message with a universal address;  
a processor for generating a request to a universal address service provider for a  
message delivery location based on the universal address; and  
an interface for receiving the requested message delivery location, wherein the  
10 message service provider routes the message based on the received message delivery  
location.

20. The message service provider of claim 19 wherein the processor includes a  
server connected to the Internet.

15        21. The message service provider of claim 19 further comprising an interface for  
sending the generated request wherein the request comprises a universal address service  
provider descriptor and user name.

20        22. The message service provider of claim 19 further comprising an interface for  
sending the generated request wherein the request comprises a message type, universal  
address service provider descriptor, and user name.

25        23. The message service provider of claim 19 further comprising an interface for  
sending the generated request wherein the request comprises a message service provider  
identification.

24. The message service provider of claim 23 wherein the requested message  
delivery location is also based on the message service provider identification.

30        25. The message service provider of claim 19 wherein receiving a message with a  
universal address comprises receiving one of a letter and a package.

26. The message service provider of claim 19 wherein the received message with a universal address comprises one of a phone number, a pager message, and a facsimile.

5 27. The message service provider of claim 19 wherein the received message with a universal address comprises an email.

~~28.~~ A universal address service provider comprising:  
an interface for receiving a universal address from a requestor;  
10 an interface for receiving a message type;  
a processor for determining an identity of the requestor and determining a message delivery location based on the universal address;  
an interface for delivering the message delivery location to the requestor; and  
a database including message delivery locations, wherein the processor determines a  
15 message delivery location based on the universal address message type.

29. The method of claim of claim 28 wherein the processor determines that the requestor has been granted access to the message delivery location and transmits the message deliver location to the requestor when access has been granted.

20 30. The method of claim 28 wherein the processor receives a request to change the message delivery location and stores a new message delivery location in response to the request.

25 31. The method of claim 28 wherein the processor selects one message delivery location from a plurality of message delivery locations associated with the universal address based on the message type.

30 32. The method of claim 28 wherein the processor uses a user name to determine the message delivery location.

33. The method of claim 28 wherein determining the identity of the requestor comprises receiving a message service provider identification.

34. The method of claim 28 wherein determining the message delivery location  
5 comprises determining an address.

35. The method of claim 28 wherein determining the message delivery location comprises determining one of a phone number, a pager number, and a facsimile number.

10 36. The method of claim 28 wherein determining the message delivery location comprises determining an email address.

37. A message delivery system comprising:  
a message service provider;  
15 a universal address service provider; and  
a universal address service provider authority for managing the message delivery system, wherein the message service provider accesses the universal address service provider to determine a message delivery location.

20 38. A method for updating an address comprising:  
receiving a universal address;  
receiving an identification;  
determining whether the identification is valid;  
accessing a database of universal addresses if the identification is valid; and  
25 automatically changing a marker for a message delivery location for the received universal address associated with a message service from a first message delivery location to a second message delivery location.

30 39. A device for sending messages comprising:  
a memory for storing a universal address;  
a interface for sending the universal address to a universal address service provider;

an interface for receiving a message delivery location associated with the universal address from the universal address service provider; and  
a processor for sending a message with the received message delivery location.